

COLLECTION OVERVIEW

MANUSCRIPTS

I. SCOPE

This overview includes all of the Manuscript Division's collections with the exception of the Library of Congress Archives, Foreign Copying Program reproductions, microfilm holdings of collections in other repositories, and various single-item holdings in the Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection.

II. SIZE

In 2008, the Library's manuscript holdings totaled some sixty million items in more than eleven thousand collections. The Manuscript Division's famed presidential collections alone contain more than two million documents, and the records of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) currently comprise approximately three million items. Except in the case of small collections, precise overall item counts are not compiled. Doing so would not be cost effective, due to the sheer number and variety of items involved.

Item counts are estimated, however, at the collection level, along with precise statistics on numbers of containers and linear feet of collection space. For example, the papers of Supreme Court justice William J. Brennan number some 379,000 items in 1,087 containers or 434.8 linear feet; those of anthropologist Margaret Mead number 528,446 items in 1,785 containers, or 781.7 linear feet; and those of aviation pioneers Wilbur and Orville Wright number 32,250 items in 120 containers, or 61 linear feet. Numbers of items are approximated for all collections upon receipt and accessioning. This information is refined during processing, when collection arrangement and description is completed, generally to the folder level. Finding aids and electronic catalog records indicate to users the estimated number of items in a given collection, the date span of items, and the number of containers or archival boxes. If all or part of the collection has been reproduced, the number of microfilm reels is also indicated.

III. GENERAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS

In 1823, Thomas Jefferson wrote that it is "the duty of every good citizen to use all the opportunities, which occur to him, for preserving documents relating to the history of our country." Jefferson followed his own directive, and among the first manuscripts acquired by the Library of Congress were the records of the Virginia Company of London, which Jefferson had meticulously assembled as part of the library he sold to Congress in 1815 to replace the earlier congressional library burned during the War of 1812.

In the nearly two hundred years since this earliest manuscript acquisition, the Library has amassed what is arguably the most extensive and comprehensive collection of personal papers and organizational records relating to American history and culture ever assembled. Foremost among the division's collections are the papers of twenty-three presidents of the United States ranging in time from George Washington to Calvin Coolidge. Also preserved are the papers of cabinet officials, members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, Supreme Court justices and other members of the federal judiciary, military officers and diplomats, artists and writers, scientists and inventors, and other notable Americans whose lives reflect our country's evolution. Joining the papers of individuals are the records of a number of nongovernmental organizations which have significantly shaped American society.

Depth, breadth, and variety are among the hallmarks of the Library's manuscript collections. The focus is on the personal papers of individuals prominent in their fields; on key topics of national significance; on documentation of the social, intellectual, and political history and culture of the United States; and English-language materials. Manuscripts are also collected that are bilingual or written in languages other than English, or which deal with world travelers, explorations, and diplomatic functions; the involvement of the United States in foreign wars and affairs of state; the stories of American expatriates and intellectuals abroad; scientific collaborations; and the study by Americans of comparative cultures.

For more information on manuscript collecting policies and the types of material found within personal papers and organizational records, see Collections Policy Statements—Manuscripts.

IV. AREAS OF DISTINCTION

A. Presidential Collections

The Library's pre-eminent reputation in collecting begins with Americana and American political and intellectual history. Of particular strength in the Manuscript Division are the collections of the Founding Era and documentation of the American presidency in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The division holds the primary collections of papers of twenty-three presidents from George Washington through Calvin Coolidge. Beginning with the administration of Herbert Hoover, separate presidential libraries became the norm, and these libraries are under the administrative aegis of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The Library of Congress continues to collect miscellaneous presidential materials of import and to build additions to its existing presidential collections. Collected as well are complementary papers of prominent associates of the presidents and cabinet officials.

B. Congressional Collections

The division has the papers of more than nine hundred members, beginning with those who participated in the Continental Congress and continuing into major contemporary collections, such as those of Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Patsy T. Mink. Among the holdings are the papers of some of the most influential legislators in the nation's history, including Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, Salmon P. Chase, Henry L. Dawes, William Jennings Bryan, Robert M. La Follette, and Robert A. Taft.

C. Federal Judiciary

The Federal Judiciary is another area of strength, surpassed by no other repository in terms of the number and scope of collections. The division holds the papers of many of the principal justices of the U.S. Supreme Court, from John Marshall to Earl Warren through Harry Blackmun, Thurgood Marshall, Sandra Day O'Connor, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The division also collects the papers of influential lower-court judges, such as Simon E. Sobeloff, J. Skelly Wright, Frank M. Johnson, Gerhard Gesell, and Clement F. Haynsworth, Jr.

D. Military Affairs

The division's military collections span the entire history of the United States and are especially rich from the Revolutionary War through World War II. The Civil War is particularly well documented, as the division is the principal repository for the papers of President Abraham Lincoln as well as those of generals Nathaniel P. Banks, Pierre G. Beauregard, Benjamin F. Butler, Jubal A. Early, Richard S. Ewell, Charles Ewing, William B. Franklin, James A. Garfield, Ulysses S. Grant, Samuel P. Heintzelman, Henry J. Hunt, Joseph W. Keifer, George B. McClellan, Montgomery C. Meigs, Carl Schurz, Philip H. Sheridan, and William T. Sherman. Admirals Andrew Hill Foote, Louis M. Goldsborough, and Samuel Phillips Lee are also represented, as are hundreds of noncommissioned officers and enlisted personnel. The famous Confederate States of America collection and the papers of Burton N. Harrison, secretary to Jefferson Davis, are also among the more than one thousand collections in the division that relate to the Civil War. Luminaries from World War I (John J. Pershing and John Archer Lejeune) and World War II (Henry H. Arnold, Ira C. Eaker, Curtis E. LeMay, George Patton, and Carl Spaatz) are also represented in the collections.

E. Foreign Policy

Only the official records of the State Department surpass the richness of the Manuscript Division's holdings for documenting American foreign policy. The division houses the papers of more than half of the individuals who have served as secretary of state from the first secretary, Thomas Jefferson, who assumed office in 1789, to Henry Kissinger and Alexander Haig, who resigned in 1982. More than two hundred other collections comprise the papers of diplomats or contain significant material relating to American diplomacy.

F. Literary, Cultural, and Scientific Collections

Literary collections include the finest collection of Walt Whitman manuscripts in the world and the papers of many other major American poets and authors, including Owen Wister, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Muriel Rukeyser, Truman Capote, James M. Cain, Ayn Rand, Ralph Ellison, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth. Journalism is also a strength and includes the papers of the Reid Family, Joseph Pulitzer, William Allen White, Roy Howard, Horace Greeley, Joseph and Stewart Alsop, Henry Brandon, Janet Flanner, William Safire, Eric Sevareid, Neil Sheehan, Hedrick Smith, and Mary McGrory. Theater and motion picture history resources include papers of actors such as Lillian Gish, Eva Le Gallienne, Hume Cronyn, Jessica Tandy, Arnold Moss, and producers and directors such as Thomas Ince, Rouben Mamoulian, and Joshua Logan. A massive collection of Copyright Deposit Dramas is composed of original typescripts, registered as unpublished, for vaudeville, theater, film, radio, and television. Scientific collections include documentation of the careers of some of the nation's finest minds and inventors, from Samuel F. B. Morse and Alexander Graham Bell, to creators of the atomic bomb, the microchip, and the

shapers of the nation's space program. Social scientific collections include the papers of Sigmund Freud. Landscape architecture, urban design, conservation, and the arts are represented by the papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Russell W. Peterson, Russell E. Train, Mies van der Rohe, James A. McNeill Whistler, Daniel Chester French, and others.

G. African American and Women's History

The Library of Congress leads as well in the fields of African American history and U.S. women's history. In these fields, collecting encompasses both personal papers and the records of key organizations. Examples of these holdings include the papers of Booker T. Washington, Frederick Douglass, Mary Church Terrell, the American Colonization Society, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and National Urban League; Clara Barton, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the Blackwell Family, Margaret Sanger, Clare Boothe Luce, the National American Woman Suffrage Association, National Woman's Party, and National Women's Trade Union League.

H. Social History and Other Strengths

Although the papers of prominent or path-breaking individuals are a focus of collection policy, collective democracy, social reform, the family, religion, and American life are also important concerns in manuscript acquisitions. The division holds extraordinary papers, for example, related to colonial and nineteenth-century seafaring, whaling, and naval history. Western territorial exploration and expansion, and scientific and geographical expeditions, are other areas of strength, as are the histories of aeronautic invention and of the abolition, woman's suffrage, and early conservation movements. Collections in military history include the papers of top commanders and policy makers, but they also include diaries, letters, and other personal materials that capture the eye-witness perceptions and experiences of ordinary soldiers and sailors and their families.

V. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Like most archival repositories, the Manuscript Division continues to explore the best way to collect born-digital material, including scientific data, email messages, and word processing files. The division increasingly confronts the challenges of preserving older electronic material saved on now-outmoded technology, and modern material that comes to the Library on mediums such as hard drives and floppy disks which pose particular issues, especially when they contain classified or restricted materials. It has also been actively involved in the Library's pilot program for Web capture and archiving of online sites germane to the Library's existing manuscript collections. Division specialists, in their role as recommending officers, also help build Library-wide subscription database offerings which often complement manuscript collections. The division is also in the forefront in the development of descriptive standards and the preparation and dissemination of online finding aids, which greatly assist researchers' efforts to identify relevant source material and prepare for onsite visits.

Beginning with the release in 1997 of *Words and Deeds in American History: Selected Documents Celebrating the Manuscript Division's First 100 Years*, the Manuscript Division has been a leader in the proposal, planning, and implementation of major sites for the Library's

American Memory collections of digitized documents. In 2008, there were 27 Manuscript Division sites, multidivision sites including manuscript materials, or collaborative manuscript sites created in cooperation with other institutions, available online through American Memory and Global Gateways. These include digitized presidential papers (Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Lincoln), literary papers (Hannah Arendt, Zora Neale Hurston), scientific collections (Samuel F. B. Morse, Alexander Graham Bell, Wilbur and Orville Wright), collections in African American history and culture (Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, Frederick Douglass Papers), and women's history (National Woman's Party). In addition, division staff were instrumental in building *American Women: A Gateway to Library of Congress Resources for the Study of Women's History and Culture in the United States*, a research portal offering patrons entry into women's history collections in divisions throughout the Library. More digital projects are underway, both within the Manuscript Division (Papers of Andrew Jackson) and in collaboration with other institutions (Papers of Abraham Lincoln).

Electronic resources also exist for manuscripts in virtual exhibition form. Materials from physical exhibitions curated by the Manuscript Division, or created in collaboration with other divisions or loan institutions, are mounted by the Library's Interpretative Programs Office on the Library of Congress Exhibitions Web site. In 2008, there were 31 such virtual exhibitions featuring manuscripts available online. Some profile particular collections; others draw items from a multitude of different collections. The virtual exhibition sites provide digital resources on individuals such as Benjamin Franklin, Winston Churchill, Bob Hope, Margaret Mead, Walt Whitman, Orville and Wilbur Wright, and Charles and Ray Eames and on subjects from slavery to civil rights, Jewish life and history, exploration and indigenous cultures, religious belief, and literary, scientific, and artistic accomplishment.

VI. WEAKNESSES/EXCLUSIONS

The Library's policy is to acquire personal papers and organizational records that focus on the history, law, culture, and politics of the United States. The Library has become, since 1993, highly selective in acquiring and maintaining large collections of organizations such as businesses, financial houses, labor unions, and grassroots or professional associations. It has, however, a great deal to offer to researchers in terms of the organizational records that have been obtained in the past. While excluding most new large records collections, the Library continues to accept additions to the records of certain organizations. Among them are professional organizations such as Phi Beta Kappa and the American Council of Learned Societies, civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and political advocacy groups such as the National Council for Jewish Women and the League of Women Voters.

Changes in the tax laws and the sharply rising commercial market value of original manuscripts have severely compromised the Library's ability (and the ability of other institutions) to collect the papers of modern writers. Collections that once would have come to the division as gifts are now offered only at a price, and heirs to estates increasingly desire compensation beyond the tax advantages of donation. The work of prominent modern authors is still actively pursued as gifts, and as funding allocations and prices permit, by purchase.

In current collecting policy, acceptance of papers of modern members of Congress is limited to those who crafted major legislation that has had significant and wide-ranging national import, who had significant or path-breaking careers outside their service in Congress, or whose legislative careers dovetail with broad-based movements of social reform which are also documented in the Library's collections (such as the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, or the women's liberation movement of the 1970s). Storage considerations and other issues limit the Library's capacity to accept universally congressional papers, which are now typically donated to institutions in members' home states.

Some subject areas of collecting are particularly strong for certain eras of American history, and not in others. For example, the division has many papers of missionaries and religious materials of the nineteenth century, including a Shaker collection, but not of contemporary religious figures. The division holds superb women's history materials from the mid-nineteenth century through the Progressive Era, including an unmatched body of suffrage manuscripts and the records of key reform organizations, but more contemporary organizational materials have gone to other institutions. Although the papers of Thomas Jefferson, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, and others hold crucial historic and ethnographic materials in Native American history, the field has not to date been an area of major contemporary collecting.

The division makes clear to donors the types of materials it will and will not accept within both organizational records and personal papers. Excluded are most non-literary or biographical materials available in published form, financial records, personnel records, duplicates, and materials of a nature that would require untenable restrictions in terms of future use.